

Dear Representative Harp,

3/25/11

My name is Amy Barone and I am a sophomore in the Ellis Clark agriscience program in Woodbury. I live in Watertown and I attend this regional agriscience school choice program because I know that if it weren't for this school, then I wouldn't have these amazing opportunities. I like this program because I am able to incorporate hands on experience in the classroom as well as outside of it. These opportunities have included; castrating pigs, halter training baby calves, assisting in the birth of piglets and getting a job at the age of 15 to help with my school. At this moment in time I do not know my future occupation, but I know by the end of my senior year, I will have my occupation picked out for good. An SAE is a hands on job that you are required to have in order to stay enrolled in the ag program. My SAE is an assistant groomer at Camelot Kennels in Wolcott, Connecticut. There I shampoo, condition, and blow dry dogs and cats. I enjoy my job very much, it has helped me learn the behavior of animals, and the connection that an animal and a human could have. It is nice knowing that the customers trust you to leave their dogs in your hands. This job has also helped me bring my experiences to the classroom, and further my education. Without this program, I know that my life would be forever changed, this program has helped me become a better person, and a better student. These vo-ag schools in the state of Connecticut deserve the best. I am writing this letter to encourage you to **please urge the Appropriations Committee to pledge 9 million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the Governor's budget to the state's 19 regional (vo-ag) agriscience programs.** Our agriscience programs have been drastically underfunded for over 20 years as compared to the magnet schools, charter schools, vocational technical schools and the other school choice funding programs. (Please see attached flyer with details). This will allow hundreds of more students like me to enroll in these successful programs so they will have the same positive experience I am having now.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "AmyLee Barone". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

AmyLee Barone.